PROCEDURE		DATE OF APPROVAL
Internal Assessment and Quality Assurance Policy		January 2026
APPROVED BY	**VERSION NO.**	**VALID UNTIL**
Executive Board	5	January 2029

OWNER	Assistant Director Quality (TLA)
GROUP EXECUTIVE LEAD	Executive Director of Quality
DOCUMENT TYPE	Policy ☒ Group Procedure ☐ Local Procedure ☐
PURPOSE	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the assessment practice is consistent across the Group and that all outcomes/criteria for a programme / course are met within the assessment process.
APPLICABLE TO	All NCG employees, as well as consultants, vendors, agency workers, contractors, service users, trainees/students, volunteers and/or any other parties who have a business relationship with NCG.
EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED [POLICIES ONLY]	Yes ☒	No ☐	N/A ☐
	(If EA not applicable, please explain)
KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY	The policy details the principles of assessment and provides clear work instructions at each stage of the assessment, IQA process and achievement board processes.
EXPECTED OUTCOME	Readers are expected to understand the organisational position on the assessment and internal quality assurance process, know their responsibilities in relation to the policy and comply with the terms of the policy.

MISCELLANEOUS	
LINKED DOCUMENTS	• NCG Strategy Towards 2030 • NCG Quality Plan 2023-26 • NCG Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EBID) Policy • NCG Qualification and Assessment Malpractice Policy • NCG Student Positive Behaviour Policy • NCG Non-Examination Assessment Policy • NCG Code of Conduct Policy • NCG HE Assessment Policy

KEYWORDS	- Assessment - Internal quality assurance - Achievement board

Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
	Yes	**No**	**Explanatory Note if required**
EIA 1 - Does the proposed policy/procedure align with the intention of the NCG Mission and EDIB Intent Statement in Section 2?	☒	☐	The answer to this must be YES
EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy/procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?	☐	☒	
Age	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Disability / Difficulty	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Gender Reassignment	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Marriage and Civil Partnership	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Race	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Religion or Belief	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Sex	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Sexual Orientation	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA3 - Does the proposed policy/processes contain any language/terms/references/ phrasing that could cause offence to any specific groups of people or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA4 - Does the policy/process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process include any positive action to support underrepresented groups of people, or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this could be yes or no as positive action is lawful. However, an explanation must be provided for clarity.
EIA 6 - How do you know that the above is correct?	This policy has been reviewed by the QTLA forum, Policy Review Council, NCG Executive NCG, prior to approval by NCG Corporation. The membership of these groups is indicative of the wider population within NCG.		

1. **GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT**

   This policy applies to all staff and learners undertaking further education and training, including A levels, T-levels, and apprenticeships and subcontracted provision, in all colleges of NCG. Staff involved with the delivery and assessment of higher education will follow the NCG Higher Education Assessment Policy and Moderation Process.

   The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the assessment practice is consistent across the Group and that all outcomes/ criteria for a programme / course are met within the assessment process and fully compliant with awarding organisation requirements.

   This policy and college associated procedures are equally applicable to non-regulated qualifications, i.e., those that follow The Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) Cycle. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the NCG Quality Assurance of Non-regulated Provision.

2. **DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS**

   - **Further Education (FE)** – both education and training and apprenticeship Provision.
   - **Education and Training (E&T)** – provision formerly known as 'classroom-based provision'.
   - **Apprenticeships (Apps)** – provision that is a full apprenticeship framework or Standard.
   - **Awarding Body** – The organisation that approves the College to deliver and award qualifications.
   - **Professional Body** - an organisation with individual members practicing a profession or occupation in which the organisation maintains an oversight of the knowledge, skills, conduct and practice of that profession or occupation.
   - **Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)** – ensures that internally assessed qualifications have assignment briefs that are fit for purpose, are assessed accurately against the assessment criteria and produces consistent assessment and grading across qualifications. Some Awarding Bodies refer to this as Internal Moderation (IM) or Internal Verification (IV).

- **Assessor** – The assessor refers to any individual that writes and/or assesses criteria or units of a qualification.

- **Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)** – An individual in possession of an accredited IQA qualification, and/or who is responsible for carrying out all aspects of IQA.

- **Lead Internal Quality Assurer (LIQA)** – An individual in possession of an accredited IQA qualification, and/or who is responsible for overseeing the IQA process and standardising practice within their functional area Teacher with Programme Lead Responsibilities – An individual who has been given programme lead responsibilities by the Head of Curriculum or Curriculum Leader.

- **Quality Nominee** – A college representative for an Awarding Body; in most instances this will be a member of the Quality Unit. The Quality Nominee receives notification of visits and reports, provides Awarding Body updates to the wider College.

- **Sanction** – A block on certification and or registrations imposed by the Awarding Body following an EQA sample activity.

3.   KEY PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

- Assessors and Quality Assurers of education and training and apprenticeships will be appropriately qualified as per awarding organisation and training organisations requirements.

- Assignment briefs and other assessment materials will clearly identify the learning outcomes/criteria to be achieved.

- Assessments will be written to allow learners to achieve at an appropriate level and provide opportunities for all learners to attempt all levels of criteria. Assessment materials will be internally quality assured (IQA) for adherence to the qualification specification before distributing to learners.

- Learners will be made aware at the start of their course of the number and frequency of both internal and external formative/summative assessments, with planned dates. Learners will also be made aware of the grounds and how to make an appeal against any assessment outcomes via the College Academic Appeals Procedures. For short or roll-on and roll-off programmes or National

Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and other assessment in the workplace, all assessment will be confirmed with the learner on an individual basis and will be in line with the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and/or learner's assessment plan.

- Learners will be required to undertake initial assessment of prior or existing skills and knowledge at the start of the programme to ensure that the content and assessment is appropriately challenging and at the right level.

- Written assignment briefs / assessments will be adequately introduced to the learners and employers where appropriate, before assessment takes place; teachers are expected to ensure that sufficient delivery and learning have previously taken place to provide the learners with appropriate education and training prior to assessment, in line with local procedures. In the Employer Set Project (ESP) in T-levels, candidates should not be entered for the assessment until they have covered all the knowledge and skills covered in the Core content of the qualification, so that they are in a position to complete the Employer-Set Project assessment successfully.

- NCG has a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for our learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities to support their access to education, and ensure they are not disadvantaged during teaching, learning and assessment in comparison to their peers. Reasonable adjustments should be discussed and confirmed with learners at the earliest opportunity (typically at enrolment) to ensure that timely adjustments and/or support can be implemented. On occasions where reasonable adjustment requirements are not immediately disclosed or develop / become apparent during a learner's course of study, these should be addressed and supported as soon as is practicable. This should be read in conjunction with the JCQ guidance around access arrangement and special considerations. The aim is to ensure assessment is fair and consistent, with arrangements allowing the learners to show what they know and can do, without changing the demands of the assessment.

- If potential assessment support is required, assessors must notify the appropriate college exams team to check the guidance of the relevant awarding body and liaise with the awarding body to apply for the agreement of special access arrangements. This may extend to employers where a substantial work-based placement is required, for example in T levels. An adjustment may not

be determined as reasonable if it impacts the integrity of an assessment or involves immoderate or excessive costs.

- Examples of reasonable adjustments to assessments (including exam-access arrangements) may include:

  - Scribes, reader or word processor

  - Supervised rest breaks

  - Private or smaller exam rooms

  - Additional reading and assessment time

  - Timetabling to meet learner needs

- Where programmes / courses allow, interim feedback will be provided to the learner prior to the formal verification processes on the understanding that assessment outcomes (marks / grades / standards met / not met) may subsequently change. Interim feedback will clearly reference the successful/unsuccessful attainment and highlight the relative strengths and/or areas for further improvement with straightforward guidance on what the learner needs to do to improve further, to ensure that they are able to realise their potential.

- All assessment outcomes will be formally recorded prior to being released to the learner.

- Final confirmation of summative outcomes (marks / grades / competences) will be communicated to the learner after the full internal and / or external quality assurances processes have been concluded (whichever is appropriate). For some colleges this will be after the assessment board processes have taken place or following release of awarding organisation results e.g. A level / GCSE.

- Results must be stored and secured electronically for at least the duration required by the awarding organisation - NCG colleges are advised to archive results through secure, electronic backup facilities, to be stored for a specified period of time, in accordance with the NCG Document Retention Schedule.

4.   INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE STAGES

4.1. ASSESSMENT PLAN AND IQA PLAN

Whilst each college must have their own assessment plan and IQA procedures specific to their provision, the key principles underlying these are:

- Every qualification must have an assessment plan in place at the start of each academic year (or prior to the qualification start date in the instance of midyear starts). The assessment plan must include all units and assessments delivered within the qualification and the IQA sample must be representative of the cohort(s), considering a range of risk-based factors, for example new qualifications.

- Each course or group of courses has a named lead IQA / moderator and an appropriate number of IQA's /moderators.

- All IQA's / moderators must have copies of Awarding Body centre guidance and codes of practice and be aware of the sanctions for non-compliance with the approved centre criteria.

- Where IQA takes place in the workplace, any health and safety issues which are noted during the IQA visit are reported to the college's health and safety representative to action as appropriate.

- An IQA sampling plan will be produced either at course, assessor, programme or centre level on a risk-based approach in line with awarding organisational guidance. College procedures must align to these specifications if documentation is reformatted locally.

4.2. ASSESSMENT BRIEFS

Individual assessment briefs are internally checked before being distributed to learners (stage 1), where assessment is not prescribed by the awarding organisation. If any issues are identified by the IQA, they should be addressed by the Assessor prior to issue to learners. The process will then proceed to check the accuracy and validity of assessment decisions on submission of the learner work (stage 2 – 5.4).

- Before the distribution of assessment brief (stage 1):

- ➤ The assessment brief is fit for purpose.

- ➤ Have clear deadlines and appropriate time frames

- ➤ Evidence requirements are met and standards maintained.

- ➤ The assessment is valid, authentic, current, sufficient, reliable and fair.

- ➤ That assessors clearly understand what evidence is required to meet the assessment outcomes / criteria.

- ➤ The process provides the opportunity for appropriate feedback to learners.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities – Assessment Plan, IQA Plan and Assignment Briefs.

Role	Work Instruction	Assurance Control
SLT	Implement a sampling plan to check completion and implement remedial actions if non-compliant	College Quality Curriculum Performance Reviews
LIQA / IQA	Sign off the assessment and IQA plan, with assignment briefs Ensure regular standardisation is in place with the IQA team	Completion of assessment plan, IQA and assignment brief record
Curriculum/ Course Lead	Production of the IQA sampling plan and confirmation registrations are completed before assessment commencement. Confirmation assessment briefs are compliant and/or actions have been addressed prior to issue	Stored in internal curriculum files
Teacher/ Tutor	Production of assessment plan and assignment briefs	Stored in internal curriculum files

4.3. STANDARDISATION

Standardisation / moderation should take place when a unit or assignment is delivered and assessed by more than one person; standardisation must be carried out before any formal assessment and IQA has taken place. Standardisation is

the process to discuss and mutually assess a sample of learner work to reach a consensus. This will be done with reference to the assessment criteria and assessment guidance provided in the qualification specification.

The LIQA and/or Centre lead for quality will conduct a yearly audit of the IQA and standardisation / moderation processes in each curriculum area, at least once each year with formal reports presented to the college SLT.

The outcomes and any actions resulting from IQA / moderation are followed up by the LIQA and/or Centre lead for quality, acted upon, reported and signed off in the relevant curriculum areas regular IQA / moderation meetings.

4.4. ASSESSMENT DECISIONS / IQA SAMPLING

After submission of the assessed learner work (stage 2):

A representative sample must follow the CAMERA principle (candidates, assessors, methods of assessment, evidence types, records and assessment sites). This should ensure a selection of assessments / assignments from all assessors across all units / modules / levels and across all assessment sites will be internally quality assured to check that;

- o the assessment decision is valid, authentic, current, sufficient, reliable and fair as published in the qualification specification
- o that the feedback to learners is suitably robust and provides guidance for learner development
- o where the assessment is graded the IQA agrees with the grade awarded

IQA of assessment decisions must be carried out in line with the IQA sampling plan and awarding organisation requirements. Records will be kept of the IQA / moderation process and made available for audit and kept in line with NCG's Document Retention Schedule.

4.5. ASSESSMENT BOARD / EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

The organisation that awards qualifications through a process of assessment and examinations and for colleges with internal assessments, will have a formal assessment / achievement / course board, or equivalent. Minutes of assessment

boards will be kept by curriculum and department area as appropriate and be available for audit as required.

Accredited qualifications are subject to external quality assurance (EQA); the individual awarding organisation defines the requirements of this. It is the responsibility of the Curriculum/Course Lead with support from the LIQA to ensure visits are scheduled to facilitate timely processing of achievement. Where there is a risk of sanctions during or subsequently after the visit, Centre lead for quality must be informed to establish the appropriate course of action. Following this, the report and internal action plan will be disseminated to the College SLT.

Awarding Organisation documentation will be completed in a timely fashion (within AO defined timescales), following assessment board decisions and IQA/EQA meetings and returned to the relevant exam section to be forwarded to awarding bodies.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities – Assessment Board and EQA

Role	Work Instruction	Assurance Control
SLT / Centre lead for quality	In the event of a risk of sanctions, the HoQ implements an internal action plan, disseminated to the College SLT.	College Quality Curriculum Performance Reviews
LIQA / IQA	Support the EQA visit and facilitate timely processing of achievement	Completion of assessment plan, IQA and assignment brief record.
Curriculum/ Course Lead	Implement a formal achievement / course board and take appropriate minutes. Facilitate EQA visit and complete AO documentation for exams teams for learner claims.	Stored in internal curriculum files
Teacher/ Tutor	Provide evidence of learner course assessment for the formal achievement board or equivalent	Stored in internal curriculum files

6. **AWARDING ORGANISATION CLAIM STATUS / RECORDS**

   Colleges are required to maintain accurate, auditable records of all certification claims submitted to awarding organisations. This responsibility applies whether the centre holds **Direct Claim Status (DCS)** or not:

   Where Direct Claim Status is Held:

   - DCS allows a centre to claim learner certificates without prior authorisation from an EQA. Even with DCS, colleges must keep detailed records of all claims, including learner identifiers, qualification details, claim dates, and evidence of assessment decisions. These records must be available for sampling during subsequent EQA visits and audits.

   Where Direct Claim Status is Not Held:

   - In this case, claims can only be processed after an EQA visit and sign-off. Colleges must schedule EQA visits in advance of achievement boards and ensure that claim forms are completed accurately and stored securely. Documentation should include IQA sampling records, achievement board minutes, and copies of claim forms submitted through awarding organisation portals.

   Across both scenarios, colleges should keep an up-to-date list of claim status or programmes/courses against awarding organisations. This will be held either centrally or locally at curriculum/department level.

7. **FE ACADEMIC APPEALS AGAINST INTERNAL ASSESSMENT DECISIONS**

   All students have the opportunity to raise an academic appeal if they perceive there are grounds to appeal against an academic assessment decision. Appeals are conducted following the colleges local procedures and the awarding organisation requirements. The procedures are in place to confirm the colleges compliance with the JCQ's General Regulations. Students can only appeal against an internal assessment result or decision of an internal Achievement Board for the following reasons:

- The student's performance in an assessment suffered through illness or other compelling circumstance which could not have been reasonably reported at the time of the assessment. Students who appeal on this basis will be required to show why the circumstance could not have been reported earlier.

- There were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the assessment, which adversely affected the result achieved.

- There is evidence of prejudice, bias or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more members of staff conducting the assessment.

- The Achievement Board did not consider all previous reported circumstances that may have significantly affected the student's performance. Students are reminded that such circumstances must be recorded at the time they arise.

- Identified reasonable adjustments were not implemented.

Appeals against external assessments must be authorised by the Centre lead for quality, on behalf of any candidates for whom data has been provided for the purposes of calculating a grade in a relevant qualification. This includes private candidates. Before authorising the appeal for submission, the Head of Quality must be able to demonstrate that the centre has the written consent of all candidates on whose behalf they are appealing.

8. ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE AND WHISTLEBLOWING

Should the assessor and/or verifier discover evidence of academic misconduct by the learner and/or assessor, then this will follow the process contained within NCG's Malpractice Policy.

Should any learners or staff have concerns associated with wider or widespread professional conduct, then they will follow the process set out in the NCG Whistleblowing and Disclosure Policy.

9. STATEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION

Upon approval, this policy will be uploaded to the policy portal and communicated to staff via The Business Round-Up and via the NCG intranet.

10. STATEMENT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

NCG is committed to providing equality of opportunity. Further details or our aims and objectives are outlined in our [Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Strategy](#).

This policy has been assessed to identify any potential for adverse or positive impact on specific groups of people protected by the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate either directly or indirectly. In applying this policy, we have considered eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between people from diverse groups.

11. STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION

This policy has been reviewed in consultation with QTLA forum, Policy Review Council, NCG Executive Team prior to approval to Corporation Board.

VERSION CONTROL			
Version No.	**Description of Change and Rationale**	**Author/Reviewer**	**Date Revised**
1			01 2018
2	Inclusion of EBID assessment, detailing of linked policies and reference to potential requirement in determining TAG's. Equality impact statement included.	Assistant Director Quality (TLA)	03 2019
3	Updated title and content to align to current sector terminology and inclusion of details around T-Levels.	Assistant Director Quality (TLA)	09 2021
4	Inclusion of details for the provision for reasonable adjustments for learners. Detailed grounds and procedures for academic appeals procedures	Assistant Director Quality (TLA)	09 2023
5	Transferred to the new template. Inclusion of work instruction at each stage of the internal quality assurance processes.	Assistant Director Quality (TLA)	12 2025